



For Immediate Release

Easton, MD – October 12, 2022

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Talbot County Council Meeting Highlights, Tuesday, October 11, 2022

These highlights only reflect the business items covered from the Council's approved agenda. To view the complete County Council meeting, please visit: Talbot County Meeting Videos - Talbot County, Maryland (www.talbotcountymd.gov).

Update by Easton Utilities on Connect Talbot Broadband Expansion Project – Hugh Grunden, President & CEO, Easton Utilities; John Horner, Executive Vice President & COO, Easton Utilities – Mr. Grunden and Mr. Horner provided an update on the *Connect Talbot* broadband expansion project and noted that construction is in progress across several locations throughout the county. To date, Easton Utilities has provided access to more than 575 customers and installed almost 100 miles of fiber. The goal is to complete all construction by the end of 2026, which would make Talbot County one of the only counties in Maryland with 100% access to broadband. For further information about the project, please visit www.EastonVelocity.com/ConnectTalbot. The County Council presented Easton Utilities with a check in the amount of \$1.75 million of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds for the project.

Update on Regional Medical Center Project – Ken Kozel, President and Chief Executive Officer, University of Maryland Shore Regional Health – Mr. Kozel and Arvin Singh, Vice President, Strategy and Communications, UMMS Shore Regional Health, provided an update on the Regional Medical Center project to the Talbot County Council and Easton Town Council. Mr. Kozel began with an overview of the history of University of Maryland Shore Regional Health on the Eastern Shore. He announced that following unanimous approval by both the University of Maryland Medical System Board and the Shore Regional Health Board, UMMS will be submitting a Letter of Intent to Maryland Healthcare Commission (MHCC) on November 4, 2022 for the Regional Medical Center project. It is anticipated that the Certificate of Need will be filed with MHCC on January 6, 2023. Mr. Kozel stated that pending approval by MHCC, construction is expected to begin in Spring 2025 and be completed by Spring 2028. The Boards also approved initiating the process for securing public and private funds for the Regional Medical Center project which will be located on property on Route 50 adjacent to the Talbot County Community Center. Specifics regarding total project cost and number of beds for the

facility are still in progress. Council congratulated Mr. Kozel on the project and thanked Shore Regional Health for their partnership along with the Town of Easton.

Proclamation: 100th Anniversary - Avalon Theatre – The Council presented a proclamation to Al Bond, President and Chief Executive Officer, Avalon Foundation, in recognition of the Avalon Theatre's 100th anniversary. The proclamation noted the outstanding contributions to the citizens of, and visitors to, the Town of Easton and Talbot County and the surrounding area as a movie theater, center for arts and entertainment and cultural hub for the past 100 years. Mr. Bond provided an overview of the work of the Avalon Foundation in the community and thanked the Council for their recognition.

Presentation of Proposal for KIA Memorial Bench - Nancy Gooding and Agnes Blades, VFW Post 5118 Auxiliary – Ms. Gooding and Ms. Blades presented their proposal for a memorial bench to be placed at the Killed in Action (KIA) memorial on the Courthouse grounds. The 60-inch backless bench will be made of granite and will cost approximately \$3,300, including installation. Funding for the project will be covered by the VFW Auxiliary and pledges from other sources; no County funds are required. Ms. Gooding noted that she had spoken with Brian Moore, County Facilities Maintenance Director about the proposed project and impact to the landscaping in order to provide a better connection for the KIA memorials. Upon motion by Council member Divilio, second by Council member Price, Council unanimously approved Ms. Gooding and Ms. Blades moving forward with the next step which is to submit an application with the Easton Historic District Commission for their review and action.

Public Hearings:

A public hearing was held on Resolution No. 335, A RESOLUTION TO AMEND THE TALBOT COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE WATER AND SEWER PLAN FOR THE PURPOSE OF RECLASSIFYING AND REMAPPING CERTAIN REAL PROPERTY LOCATED AT 4480 BACHELORS POINT ROAD, OXFORD, MARYLAND, SHOWN ON TAX MAP 53 AS PARCEL 77, FROM “W-2” AND “S-2” TO “W-1” AND “S-1” IMMEDIATE PRIORITY STATUS FOR WATER AND SEWER SERVICE FROM THE OXFORD WATER AND WASTEWATER SYSTEM which would allow a private residential property annexed into the Town of Oxford to reclassify as W-1/S-1 immediate priority status for water and sewer service from the Oxford Water and Wastewater System. Mr. Clarke noted that the Public Works Advisory Board unanimously approved recommending Council approval of Resolution No. 335 during their meeting on September 15, 2022. Mr. Tarleton noted that on October 5, 2022, the Planning Commission found Resolution No. 335 to be consistent with the Talbot County Comprehensive Plan and recommended Council approval by a vote of 4-0 (with one Planning Commission member being absent). The Council unanimously approved Resolution No. 335.

A public hearing was held on Resolution No. 336, A RESOLUTION TO AMEND THE TALBOT COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE WATER AND SEWER PLAN FOR THE PURPOSE OF ADDING OR MODIFYING THE TALBOT COUNTY CAPITAL PROJECT FOR FISCAL YEARS 2023 AND 2024 TO ADD A NEW CAPITAL PROJECT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$4.718 MILLION FOR WATER SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS FOR THE TOWN OF OXFORD which would authorize a new capital improvement project for the Town of Oxford's

water system. Mr. Clarke noted that the Public Works Advisory Board unanimously approved recommending Council approval of Resolution No. 336 during their meeting on September 15, 2022. Mr. Tarleton noted that on October 5, 2022, the Planning Commission found Resolution No. 336 to be consistent with the Talbot County Comprehensive Plan and recommended Council approval by a vote of 4-0 (with one Planning Commission member being absent). The Council unanimously approved Resolution No. 336.

Eligible for Vote:

Resolution No. 334, A RESOLUTION TO AMEND RESOLUTION NO. 175, A RESOLUTION TO ESTABLISH SEWER SERVICE CONNECTION POLICIES FROM THE UNIONVILLE, TUNIS MILLS, AND COPPERVILLE SEWER SERVICE AREA LOW-PRESSURE FORCE MAIN COLLECTION SYSTEM TO THE ROYAL OAK PUMP STATION, FOR THE PURPOSE OF EXEMPTING COUNTY GOVERNMENTAL USES AND SERVICES FROM THE PROVISIONS THEREOF, SUBJECT TO CERTAIN CONDITIONS was brought forward for vote. Mr. Clarke noted that the Public Works Advisory Board did not recommend Council approval of Resolution No. 334 during their meeting on September 15, 2022. Mr. Tarleton noted that on October 5, 2022, the Planning Commission found Resolution No. 334 to be inconsistent with the Talbot County Comprehensive Plan and recommended Council not approve by a vote of 4-0 (with one Planning Commission member being absent). The Council did not approve Resolution No. 334 by a vote of 1-4 with Council member Pack voting in favor of Resolution No. 334 and Council members Callahan, Divilio, Leshner and Price voting against Resolution No. 334.

Bill No. 1523, A BILL TO AMEND CHAPTER 190 OF THE TALBOT COUNTY CODE (ZONING, SUBDIVISION AND LAND DEVELOPMENT) TO ADD A DEFINITION OF "COUNTRY CLUB" AND TO PROVIDE FOR THE EXPANSION AND MAJOR MODIFICATION OF A NONCONFORMING COUNTRY CLUB IN THE RESOURCE CONSERVATION (RC) DISTRICT was brought forward for vote. Mr. Tarleton noted that a letter had been received from the Critical Area Commission about the legislation which, if approved by Council, will require final approval by the Critical Area Commission. Bill No. 1523 was approved by a vote of 4-0-1 with President Callahan abstaining.

Bill No. 1524, A BILL TO AMEND CHAPTER 190 OF THE TALBOT COUNTY CODE (ZONING, SUBDIVISION AND LAND DEVELOPMENT) REGARDING SOLAR ENERGY SYSTEMS was brought forward for vote. Mr. Tarleton stated the Planning Commission, during their meeting on September 26, forwarded a favorable recommendation on Amendment 1 by a vote of 4-0 (with one Commission member absent), noting the amendment was consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the purpose and intent of Chapter 190 of the County Code. Mr. Tarleton stated the Planning Commission gave an unfavorable recommendation on Amendment 2 by a vote of 4-0 (with one Commission member absent), noting that while the amendment was consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, the proposed language was not likely to be upheld by the Public Service Commission (PSC) for future Solar Energy System applications. Mr. Tarleton stated that the Planning Commission, during their meeting on September 26, forwarded a favorable recommendation on Amendment 3 by a vote of 4-0 (with one Commission member absent), noting the amendment was consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the purpose and

intent of Chapter 190 of the County Code. Mr. Tarleton stated that the Planning Commission, during their meeting on September 26, gave an unfavorable recommendation on Amendment 4 by a vote of 3-1 (with one Commission member absent), noting the amendment was inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan's goal of preserving priority agricultural lands.

and Amendments:

[Amendment 1 to Bill No. 1524.pdf \(talbotcountymd.gov\)](#)

[Amendment 2 to Bill No. 1524.pdf \(talbotcountymd.gov\)](#)

[Amendment 3 to Bill No. 1524 .pdf \(talbotcountymd.gov\)](#)

[Amendment 4 to Bill No. 1524.pdf \(talbotcountymd.gov\)](#)

Vice President Leshar proposed Amendment 5 to Bill No. 1524 which incorporates Amendment 1 with additional language exempting certain projects and resets the date to October 11, 2022. Amendment 5 was introduced by Council members Callahan, Divilio, Leshar and Pack. Council discussion ensued about the remaining amendments. Council members Callahan, Leshar and Pack withdrew their sponsorship of Amendment 4. Amendment 1 was brought forward for vote and not approved by a vote of 0-5. Amendment 2 was brought forward for vote and not approved by a vote of 1-4 with Council member Price voting for the amendment. Amendment 3 was brought forward for vote and not approved by a vote of 0-5. Amendment 5 was brought forward for vote and approved by a vote of 4-1 with Council member Price voting against the amendment. Bill No. 1524, as amended, was brought forward for vote and approved by a vote of 4-1 with Council member Price voting against the Bill.

Update by Talbot County Mental Health Workgroup - Kathryn Dilley, LCSW-C, Executive Director, Mid-Shore Behavioral Health, Inc.; Nancy Andrew, Executive Director, Talbot Family Network; Geneva Schaffle, Emergency Management Coordinator – Ms. Andrew, Ms. Dilley and Ms. Schaffle provided an overview of the work of the Mental Health Workgroup which launched in January 2022 under the Emergency Operations Center through the COVID-19 response, bringing partners together around concern about mental health needs in our community. Participating partners include: Talbot County Emergency Operations Center, Mid-Shore Behavioral Health, Talbot County Health Department and Local Addictions Authority, Talbot County Public Schools, Talbot Family Network (local management board) and Local Care Team, Maryland Coalition of Families, For All Seasons, Inc., Easton Family YMCA, Choptank Community Health System, Brookletts Place – Talbot Senior Center, and Affiliated Sante Group (Eastern Shore Crisis Response). Using a results-based accountability system, the workgroup gathered data, analyzed local conditions, identified new and existing partners and developed strategies and actions. A provider survey was completed in May 2022 which showed 17 unfilled positions for qualified therapists; over 60% of therapists or mental health agencies reporting wait times averaging 4-12 weeks (although crisis appointments are always available); and the challenges of identifying and hiring and retaining new therapists. Council thanked the workgroup for their important work and requested periodic updates.

Council Consideration of Contract for Sale and Purchase of Real Property Designated as Unit 1, Achievement Park Condominium, 510 Cadmus Lane, Easton, Maryland – Mr.

Thomas briefed Council on a contract of sale to acquire 38,000 s.f. of office/warehouse space, more or less, at Achievement Park Condominium, 510 Cadmus Lane in Easton for a new Talbot County Health Department at a price not to exceed \$13 million. Dr. Maria Maguire, Talbot County Health Officer, expressed her support for the project and noted the need for a new facility for the Talbot County Health Department. She stated the location is ideal as it is co-located with other health facilities, within walking distance of downtown Easton and will allow the Health Department to bring the community in for more services and support. Upon motion by Vice President Leshner, second by Council member Divilio, Council unanimously approved the Contract of Sale.

Council Consideration of Contract of Sale and Purchase of Real Property Designated as a Portion of Lot 20, Goldsborough Neck Road, Easton, Maryland – Mr.

Thomas briefed Council on a contract of sale to acquire approximately 1 acre of land from Tom Cohee in the sum of \$231,200 for the widening of Goldsborough Neck Road in Easton. Upon motion by Council member Divilio, second by Vice President Leshner, Council unanimously approved the Contract of Sale.

County Manager's Report:

Board and Committee appointments:

- Agricultural Land Preservation Advisory Board – Mr. Stamp requested the appointment of Jeanie George to the Agricultural Land Preservation Advisory Board. The request was unanimously approved by the Council.
- Social Services Board of Directors – Mr. Stamp requested the appointment of Andrew Hollis to the Social Services Board of Directors. The request was unanimously approved by the Council.

The Council's next legislative meeting, which has been declared a Special Legislative Day, will be held on Tuesday, October 18, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. in the Bradley Meeting Room.

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.



Left to Right: Corey Pack, Laura Price, Pete Lesher, Chuck Callahan, Hugh Grunden, John Horner, Frank Divilio



Front Row (Left to Right): Nick Richards, Michael McCormack, Pete Leshner, Al Bond, Jessica Bellis, Deana Villani

Back Row (Left to Right): Frank Divilio, Chuck Callahan, Laura Price, Corey Pack